

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PRAGUE 02489 060609Z
ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3534

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 2489

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGEN, CZ
SUBJECT: GOALS AND TASKS FOR THE AMBASSADOR

REF STATE 206538

1. THE DRAFT STATEMENT SET FORTH IN REFTEL CONCISELY SUMS UP THE MAJOR -- AS WELL AS THE MINOR -- ISSUES IN OUR RELATIONS WITH CZECHOSLOVAKIA. I ASSUME THAT THE ORDERING OF THE SECTIONS REFLECTS A STANDARD PATTERN OF PROCEEDING FROM THE BROADEST TO NARROWER INTERESTS RATHER THAN SETTING OF PRIORITIES. IN PURSUING OUR LONG-TERM GOALS OF LESSENING CZECHOSLOVAKIA'S DEPENDENCE ON THE SOVIETS AND STRENGTHENING ITS TIES WITH THE WEST, WE CANNOT IGNORE THE CLOSE LINKAGE BETWEEN OUR ABILITY TO INFLUENCE THE GOC ON SUCH MATTERS AS HUMAN RIGHTS AND BILATERAL ISSUES--ESPECIALLY CLAIMS/GOLD-- WHICH, AS LONG AS THEY ARE UNRESOLVED, KEEP OUR RELATIONS LOCKED IN A STERILE HOLDING PATTERN. GIVEN THE NATURE OF THIS REGIME AND ITS INSISTENCE ON OBEYING MOSCOW'S EVERY WHIM, THE PROSPECT OF ENCOURAGING IT TO OBSERVE HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE FINAL ACT ARE DIM ENOUGH; THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF THE CLAIMS/GOLD ISSUE PROVIDES THE REGIME WITH AN IDEAL EXCUSE FOR LIMITING ACCESS TO OFFICIALS AND THE PUBLIC WHICH MIGHT INCREASE, IF ONLY INCREMENTALLY, OUR ABILITY TO EXERT INFLUENCE. I FULLY ACCEPT THE GOALS PROPOSED, BUT WOULD LIKE TO FEEL SURE THAT IT IS RECOGNIZED THAT ENCOURAGING OBSERVANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND SEEKING RESOLUTION OF BILATERAL ISSUES ARE PARALLEL TRACKS WHICH CANNOT
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BE TRAVELED SEPARATELY.

2. ON A LESS IMPORTANT POINT, I HAVE SOME QUESTION ABOUT PLACING ECONOMIC TIES IN A SECTION SEPARATE FROM OTHER BILATERAL ISSUES, OF WHICH THE MOST IMPORTANT ARE CLEARLY ECONOMIC RELATED. I ASSUME THIS TOO IS A MATTER OF STANDARD FORMAT.

3. MY COMMENTS ON INDIVIDUAL GOALS AND TASKS FOLLOW IN THE
SAME ORDER USED IN THE DRAFT STATEMENT:

I. HUMAN RIGHTS

--IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT WHILE I, AND MY STAFF, EXPLOIT
EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO UNDERSCORE U.S. CONCERN OVER RESPECT FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS IN MEETINGS WITH OFFICIALS, I AM PERMITTED WITH RARE
EXCEPTION NO ACCESS TO THE PUBLIC, OTHER THAN A SMALL NUMBER OF
CZECHOSLOVAKS ABLE TO ATTEND EMBASSY REPRESENTATIONAL FUNCTIONS.
SOME STAFF MEMBERS REACH A WIDER BUT STILL LIMITED RANGE OF
CONTACTS.

--I EXPECT FURTHER SLOW PROGRESS ON FAMILY REUNIFICATION
AND BINATIONAL MARRIAGES, ALTHOUGH THE GOC ADJUSTS THE SPEED
OF ITS RESPONSE TO THE STAYE OF OUR
OVERALL BILATERAL RELATIONS AND TO EVOLVING SOVIET POSITIONS
ON THESE ISSUES.

--I SHALL CONTINUE TO EXERT EVERY EFFORT TO GAIN BETTER
TREATMENT FOR JOURNALISTS BUT AM NOT SANGUINE ABOUT MAKING
GREAT PROGRESS, GIVEN THE IDEOLOGICAL CLIMATE.

--I SHALL CONTINUE TO PRESS FOR BETTER ACCESS BY EMBASSY
OFFICERS TO GOC OFFICIALS, BUT IT SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED THAT WE
HAVE BEEN TOLD A TOP-LEVEL DECISION HAS BEEN MADE TO DENY US ACCESS T
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PARTY OFFICIALS.

II. BILATERAL ISSUES

--I EXPECT THAT THE EXCHANGES AGREEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION
PROGRAMS WILL BE READY FOR SIGNATURE BEFORE THE END
OF THE YEAR.

--I HAVE A FAINT HOPE OF MAKING PROGRESS TOWARD
REOPENING THE CONSULATE GENERAL AT BRATISLAVA, BUT HAVE BEEN
EXPLICITLY TOLD IT IS ANOTHER HOSTAGE TO CLAIMS/GOLD.

--FOR PRACTICAL PURPOSES, THE GOC OPERATES VIRTUALLY
AS IF THE CONSULAR CONVENTION WERE IN EFFECT. WE HAVE AGAIN
BEEN TOLD, HOWEVER, THAT PUTTING IT FORMALLY INTO
EFFECT ALSO REMAINS TIED TO CLAIMS/GOLD.

--CLAIMS/GOLD SHOULD, IN MY VIEW, BE PUT IN FIRST PLACE
IN THE BILATERAL ISSUES SECTION. I
AM EAGER TO START NEGOTIATIONS, ONCE A NEGOTIATING
POSITION IS DETERMINED.

III. ECONOMIC TIES

--IMPROVEMENT HERE IS TIGHTLY LINKED NOT ONLY WITH
CLAIMS/GOLD BUT ALSO WITH MFN.
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Message Attributes

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Control Number: n/a
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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